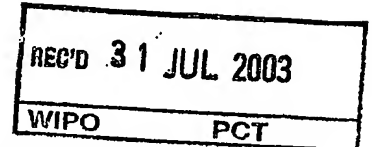




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Patent Office
Canberra



I, JULIE BILLINGSLEY, TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION SUPPORT AND SALES hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Provisional specification in connection with Application No. 2002950177 for a patent by MARY J TONIOLO as filed on 12 July 2002.

I further certify that the name of the applicant has been amended to MARY TONIOLO pursuant to the provisions of Section 104 of the Patents Act 1990.



WITNESS my hand this
Twenty-second day of July 2003

J. Billingsley

JULIE BILLINGSLEY
TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION
SUPPORT AND SALES

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AUSTRALIA
Patents Act 1990

MARY TONIOLO

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION

Invention Title:

A dance training device

The following statement is a full description of this invention
including the best method of performing it known to us:-

A DANCE TRAINING DEVICE

Field of the Invention:

The present invention relates generally to training devices to teach
5 individuals, especially novices, proper foot position and body movement during
dance. More particularly, the present invention relates to training devices for
teaching ballet. The training device of the present invention particularly allows
the individual to determine the correct position of his or her feet in relation to a
ballet bar. The present invention further allows a visually impaired individual to
10 determine the correct position of his or her feet in relation to a ballet bar.

Background of Invention:

The origins of Ballet can be traced back to the 1581 performance of the
15 Ballet Comique de la Roynne at the Palais du Petit Bourbon in Paris. Ballet has
since developed into a highly structured form of dance that requires years of
practice to perfect. Ballet is a fascinating and enjoyable art form and there are
many different forms of ballet including classical, jazz and modern. There are
also large numbers of dance companies throughout the world.

20 Individuals are often introduced to ballet at a very young age; that is as
early as two to three years old. As such, individuals wishing to learn ballet
spend years practicing and a great deal of energy is devoted to developing the
proper form and the right body position associated with ballet. The earlier
children develop correct habits relating to foot positions the easier they find it to
25 adopt the correct dance positions. Once the wrong positions are learnt and are
not corrected early, students find it very difficult to adopt the correct stance and
often lose interest. Ballet requires hours of practice and it is desirable to make
the experience as enjoyable to the novice dancer as possible.

Many individuals, especially novices, attend ballet classes where ballet
30 teachers instruct the students regarding the basic steps. During classes, ballet
teachers instruct individuals in the correct foot positions often by demonstrating
the movements. Individuals often find it difficult to remember the direction their
feet should point during classes. This problem is particularly prevalent in very
young individuals who may not even know which is their left and which is their
35 right foot.

Another difficulty which individuals encounter is that they have problems remembering the position and order of foot movement once outside ballet class and without dedicated tuition. Younger individuals are particularly disadvantaged in this respect as they are not able to reproduce the movements learnt in the class and therefore cannot practice. This often leads to frustration at their lack of progress and they can quickly lose interest.

In order to address such problems, individuals have heretofore been trained with reference to training books and taught by showing the contents of such books. Dance training books often show illustrations of foot position of dancers. Such illustrations include multiple foot positions, arrows for the direction of foot movement, and figures that are all shown in an intricate fashion on a single page. However, given ballet is often taught to children as young as two years old, this method of training has proved ineffectual. Younger individuals find it difficult to continuously maintain the level of concentration needed to utilize the prior art dance guidebooks, and will soon give up and not master and enjoy dance. For this reason, prior art dance guidebooks are not always suitable for teaching students.

Learning the basic steps is fundamental to mastering the more complicated routines as the participant skill level progresses. The basic steps in ballet can be distilled into five fundamental foot positions. A plurality of these basic steps is combined to perform simple routines. Depending on the skill level of the dancer, these routines can be choreographed together to perform set pieces. There are currently no effective training aids which teach the fundamental foot positions.

Consequently, a need still exists for a different approach to design a training aid for individuals learning the basic steps for ballet.

Summary of the Invention

In a first aspect of the invention provides a training device for a dancer comprising a mat or the like wherein said mat is provided with a set of indicia representing the preferred position for the dancer during any one or a combination of movements pertaining to said dance.

The indicia may represent the position of the feet and or the toe region of said dancer and preferably represents a sequential combination of movements pertaining to said dance.

The indicia may represent a sequential and progressive series of movements pertaining to said dance.

The indicia may represent a sequential and reversible series of movements pertaining to said dance.

5 Further indicia may be positioned to indicate the correct foot position for individuals with short legs, especially children.

The invention may comprise a combination of mats adapted to provide indicia to represent both progressive and reversible movements.

10 The indicia may be selected from any one or more a combination of tactile, visual, color-coded or other sensory devices.

The indicia may be foot shaped including left and right whole feet and toe indicia.

15 The device of the invention may also include a balancing device including horizontal or vertical bars adapted for positioning at or near said mat or mats to assist the user in balancing during the performance of said dance movements.

20 The invention may provide a plurality of mats adapted for co-engagement together or in an array by way of protruding lugs or other engaging means known to those skilled in the relevant art. The mats may include engagement means for one or a plurality of balancing bars.

The balancing bars may be adjustable vertically and or horizontally.

Brief description of the accompanying figures

25 For a further understanding of the nature and object of the invention, reference should be had to the detailed description of the exemplary embodiments which taken in conjunction with the appended drawings.

Figure 1 shows a top view of one embodiment of the training device of the present invention as a single mat with foot indicia indicating the movement of the left foot.

30 Figure 1a shows a top view of an alternative embodiment of the training device of the present invention as a single mat with foot indicia indicating the movement of the right foot.

Figure 2 shows a top view of an alternative embodiment of the training device of the present invention as a single mat.

Figure 3 shows the invention as a combination of two engaged mats with a balancing bar between and positional indicia showing the movement of the left foot.

Figure 3a shows an alternative embodiment of the present invention as a combination of two engaged mats with balancing bar between and positional indicia showing the movement of the right foot.

Figure 4 shows a side view of the training device of the present invention.

Figure 5 shows a front view of the training device of the present invention.

Figure 6 shows a perspective view of the training device of the present invention.

Figure 7 shows a top view of an alternative embodiment of the training device of the present invention with positional indicia showing the movement of the left foot.

Figure 7a shows a top view of an alternative embodiment of the training device of the present invention with positional indicia showing the movement of the right foot.

Figure 8 shows a top view of an alternative embodiment of the training device of the present invention.

Figure 9 shows a perspective view of an individual using the training device of Figure 3.

Figure 10 shows a side view of an individual using the training device of Figure 3.

Figure 11 shows a front view of one embodiment of the adjustable ballet bar of the present invention.

Figure 12 shows a front on view of an alternative embodiment of the adjustable ballet bar of the present invention.

30 Preferred embodiments of the Present Invention

The invention will now be described with reference to particular embodiments and examples that are not limiting to the scope of the invention. The drawings show elements of the present invention, which are merely representative of the preferred embodiment inasmuch as the preferred embodiment employs colored elements which are not possible to show in the drawings.

Referring now to the drawings of the training device of the present invention, and particularly to Figs. 1, 1a and 2, there are illustrated two training mats 1 and 17 which are adapted for ballet.

Referring firstly to Fig. 1, training mat 1 is a rectangular shaped mat that is particularly suited to progressive step training, particularly in relation to teaching where a dancer moves their left foot. Alternatively, the training mat 1 may be of any geometric shape. Preferably, the training mat has at least one substantially straight edge. The training mat can be provided with a balancing ballet bar 26 or 33 as illustrated in Figs. 11 and 12 respectively that can be fitted to the mat. Said bar can be interlocking with the mat or alternatively, said bar can be separate from the mat but placed in a close juxtaposition to allow the dancer to balance. It is important that said bar is placed in close proximity to the dancer to allow the dancer to balance when performing the dance movements.

Referring now to Fig. 1a, training mat 1' is a rectangular shaped mat that is particularly suited to progressive step training, particularly in relation to teaching where a dancer moves their right foot. Alternatively, the training mat 1' may be of any geometric shape. Preferably, the training mat has at least one substantially straight edge. The training mat can be provided with a balancing ballet bar 26 or 33 that can be fitted to the mat. Said bar can be interlocking with the mat or alternatively, said bar can be separate from the mat but placed in a close juxtaposition to allow the dancer to balance. It is important that said bar is placed in close proximity to the dancer to allow the dancer to balance when performing the dance movements. Training mat 1' may be printed on the back of training mat 1.

Referring now to Fig. 2, an alternative shape of mat 17 is a semi-circular shaped mat that is particularly suited to repetition and reversible steps. Alternatively, the training mat 17 may be of any geometric shape. Preferably, the training mat has at least one substantially straight edge. The training mat can also be provided with a balancing ballet bar 26 or 33 that can be fitted to the mat. Said bar can be interlocking with the mat or alternatively, said bar can be separate from the mat but placed in close juxtaposition to allow the dancer to balance.

Both training mats 1, 1' and 17 can be made from pliable materials such as synthetic polymers, natural fabrics, and others known to those skilled in the art, which may be rolled into a compact package for storage.

Alternatively, training mat 1, 1' and 17 can be made from a rigid material such as plastics, woods, laminates, and others known to those skilled in the art. Whether a pliable or rigid material is selected for producing training mat 1, 1' and 17, generally, a thickness is chosen which allows users to stand on the mat without movement thereof, and to withstand wear and tear.

Referring now to Fig. 3, the training mats 1, 17 are attached along one leading edge, and a balancing ballet bar 26 is placed in a position between the said mats. Preferably said bar is attached to the mats and is able to support dancer during the performance of dance routines. The positioning of said bar is beneficial as it allows the dancer to maintain the correct body position while performing dance routines.

Training mats 1 and 17 as illustrated in Fig. 3 are attached along one leading edge. Said mats can be interlocking and said attachment can be temporary such as a zipper, hook and loop fastener, buttons or others known to those skilled in the art. An alternative embodiment comprises the mats being permanently affixed to each other. In yet another embodiment, the training mats are placed in close juxtaposition without been attached along one leading edge.

Positional indicia are affixed to training mat 1 comprising a series of foot positions 2 to 16, 4B, 5B and 6B. Further positional indicia are affixed to training mat 17 comprising a series of foot position 18, 20 to 22 and toe indicia 19, 23 and 25 and 24 to 25.

The positional indicia 2 to 16, 4B, 5B and 6B and 18 to 25 may be affixed to said training mats by a painting process; a silk-screening process or other commonly used coating process known to those skilled in the art. Alternatively, the positional indicia may be affixed to give a tactile sensation to the individual, especially visually impaired individuals. The tactile indicia may be temporally attached to training mat 1 and 17. Alternatively, the tactile indicia may be permanently attached to training mat 1 and 17.

Positional indicia 2, 4, 4B, 6, 8, 11, 14, 18, 23 and 25 are preferably attached to training mat 1 and 17 as a red colour, while positional indicia 3, 5, 5B, 7, 6B, 9, 10, 13, 12, 15, 16, 19, 21, 22 and 24 are preferably attached to training mat 1 and 17 as a blue colour. Alternatively, positional indicia 2, 4, 4B, 6, 8, 11, 14, 18, 23 and 25 are attached to said mat as any color, while positional indicia 3, 5, 5B, 7, 6B, 9, 10, 13, 12, 15, 16, 19, 21, 22 and 24 are preferably attached to said mat as any other color.

As shown in Fig. 1, positional indicia 2, 4, 4B, 6, 8, 11, 14 and 18 indicate where a dancer places their right foot. Positional indicia 23 and 25 indicate where a dancer places their right toe. Positional indicia 3, 5, 5B, 7, 6B, 9, 10, 13, 12, 15, 16, 22, 21 and 24 indicate where a dancer places his or her left foot. Positional indicia 19 instructs where a dancer places their left toe.

Referring now to training mat 1 that helps teach a dancer where to move their left foot. A dancer places their right foot on positional indicia 6 and their left foot on positional indicia 7. The individual then moves their right foot from positional indicia 6 along arrow 6a to positional indicia 4. The individual then moves their left foot from positional indicia 7, along arrow 7a to positional indicia 5. Alternatively, the movement of both feet can be performed simultaneously. It is preferable that individuals using the foot indicia of the present invention balance themselves by holding the ballet bar device 26 or 33. The use of the ballet bar device is encouraged as it allows the individual, especially a novice, to more easily control the movement of their feet and results in a more reproducible body movement.

Further, an individual can place their right foot on positional indicia 4B and their left foot on positional indicia 6B and move their left foot along arrow 7B to positional indicia 5B.

Further, an individual can place their right foot on positional indicia 8 and their left foot on positional indicia 10 and move their left foot along arrow 10a to positional indicia 9.

Further, an individual can place their right foot on positional indicia 11 and their left foot on positional indicia 12 and move their left foot along arrow 13a to positional indicia 13.

Further, an individual can place their right foot on positional indicia 14 and their left foot on positional indicia 16 and move their left foot along arrow 16a to positional indicia 15.

Further, an individual can place their right foot on positional indicia 18 and their left foot on positional indicia 19.

Further, an individual can place their right leg on positional indicia 20 and their left leg on positional indicia 22.

Further, an individual can place their left leg on positional indicia 21 and their right foot on positional indicia 23.

Further, an individual can place their left foot on positional indicia 24 and their right foot on positional indicia 25.

Referring now to Fig. 3a, the training mats 1' and 17 are attached along one leading edge, and a balancing ballet bar 26 is placed in a position between the said mats. Preferably said bar is attached to the mats and is able to support dancer during the performance of dance routines. The positioning of
 5 said bar is beneficial as it allows the dancer to maintain the correct body position while performing dance routines.

Training mats 1' and 17 as illustrated in Fig. 3a are attached along one leading edge. Said mats can be interlocking and said attachment can be temporary such as a zipper, hook and loop fastener, buttons or others known to
 10 those skilled in the art. An alternative embodiment comprises the mats being permanently affixed to each other. In yet another embodiment, the training mats are placed in close juxtaposition without been attached along one leading edge.

Positional indicia are affixed to training mat 1' comprising a series of foot
 15 positions 2' to 16', 4B', 5B' and 6B'. Further positional indicia are affixed to training mat 17 comprising a series of foot position 18, 20 to 22 and toe indicia 19, 23 and 25 and 24 to 25.

The positional indicia 2' to 16', 4B', 5B' and 6B' and 18 to 25 may be affixed to said training mats by a painting process; a silk-screening process or
 20 other commonly used coating process known to those skilled in the art. Alternatively, the positional indicia may be affixed to give a tactile sensation to the individual, especially visually impaired individuals. The tactile indicia may be temporally attached to training mat 1' and 17. Alternatively, the tactile indicia may be permanently attached to training mat 1' and 17.

25 Positional indicia 2', 4', 4B', 6', 6B', 9', 10', 12', 13', 15', 16', 23 and 25 are preferably attached to training mat 1' and 17 as a red colour, while positional indicia 3', 5', 5B', 7', 8', 11', 14', 19, 21, 22 and 24 are preferably attached to training mat 1' and 17 as a blue colour. Alternatively, positional indicia 2', 4', 4B', 6', 6B', 9', 10', 12', 13', 15', 16', 23 and 25 are attached to
 30 said mat as any color, while positional indicia 3', 5', 5B', 7', 8', 11', 14', 19, 21, 22 and 24 are preferably attached to said mat as any other color.

As shown in Fig. 1, positional indicia 2', 4', 4B', 6', 6B', 9', 10', 12', 13', 15', 16' and 18 and 20 indicate where a dancer places their right foot. Positional indicia 23 and 25 indicate where a dancer places their right toe.
 35 Positional indicia 3', 5', 5B', 7', 8', 11', 14', 21, 22 and 24 indicate where a

dancer places his or her left foot. Positional indicia 19 instructs where a dancer places their left toe.

Referring now to training mat 1' that helps teach a dancer where to move their left foot. A dancer places their right foot on positional indicia 6' and their
 5 left foot on positional indicia 7'. The individual then moves their right foot from positional indicia 6' along arrow 6a' to positional indicia 4'. The individual then moves their left foot from positional indicia 7', along arrow 7a' to positional indicia 5'. Alternatively, the movement of both feet can be performed simultaneously. It is preferable that individuals using the foot indicia of the
 10 present invention balance themselves by holding the ballet bar device 26 or 33. The use of the ballet bar device is encouraged as it allows the individual, especially a novice, to more easily control the movement of their feet and results in a more reproducible body movement.

Further, an individual can place their right foot on positional indicia 6B'
 15 and their left foot on positional indicia 5B' and move their right foot along arrow 7B' to positional indicia 4B'.

Further, an individual can place their right foot on positional indicia 10' and their left foot on positional indicia 8' and move their right foot along arrow 10a' to positional indicia 9'.

20 Further, an individual can place their right foot on positional indicia 13' and their left foot on positional indicia 11' and move their right foot along arrow 13a' to positional indicia 13'.

Further, an individual can place their right foot on positional indicia 16' and their left foot on positional indicia 14' and move their right foot along arrow
 25 16a' to positional indicia 15'.

Further, an individual can place their right foot on positional indicia 18 and their left tow on positional indicia 19.

Further, an individual can place their right leg on positional indicia 20 and their left leg on positional indicia 22.

30 Further, an individual can place their left leg on positional indicia 21 and their right tow on positional indicia 23.

Further, an individual can place their left foot on positional indicia 24 and their right tow on positional indicia 25.

It is advantageous to repeat the above movements using the described
 35 foot movements in order to improve the individual's technique. By following the

foot positional indicia as described above, the individual can quickly learn the basic steps of ballet.

Referring now to Fig. 4, the training device of the present invention is shown side-on, with training mat 1, 17 and ballet balancing bar 26 positioned in the middle. Alternatively, the ballet balancing bar 26 can be positioned substantially in the middle.

Referring now to Fig. 5, the training device of the present invention is shown front on with training mat 1, 17 and ballet balancing bar 26 positioned between said mats. Alternatively, the ballet balancing bar 26 can be positioned substantially in the middle.

Referring now to Fig. 6, the training device of the present invention is shown in perspective with the training mat 1, 17 and ballet balancing bar 26 positioned between said mats.

Referring now to Fig. 7, the training device of the present invention can be used with training mat 1 and ballet bar device 26 alone. Alternatively, training mat 1 can be used in conjunction with ballet bar 33. In still another embodiment of the present invention, training mat 1 can be used in conjunction with a wall mounted ballet bar device.

Referring now to Fig. 7a, an alternative embodiment of the training device of the present invention whereby training mat 1' and ballet bar device 26 are shown alone. Alternatively, training mat 1' can be used in conjunction with ballet bar 33. In still another embodiment of the present invention, training mat 1' can be used in conjunction with a wall mounted ballet bar device.

Referring now to Fig. 8, the training device of the present invention can be used with training mat 17 and ballet bar 26 alone. Alternatively, training mat 17 can be used in conjunction with ballet bar 33. In still another embodiment of the present invention, training mat 17 can be used in conjunction with a wall mounted ballet bar device.

Referring now to Fig. 9, the training device of the present invention is illustrated with an individual using said device. Alternatively, the training device of the present invention can be used with two dancers simultaneously. Both individuals use the ballet bar device to support themselves.

Referring to Fig. 11, the ballet balancing bar 26 is illustrated and is constructed so that the height of bar 30 is adjustable. This is preferably accomplished with adjustable-height members in any conventional mechanical

means, such as collapsing with a sliding or telescoping action. In the illustrated embodiment in Fig 11, the collapsing action is accomplished with telescoping frame members 27 and 28. In this embodiment, the telescoping is accomplished by having lower members 29 and 31 slide within upper members 28 and 27, respectively and may be reasonably locked in a number of height positions by any conventional means as would be apparent by those skilled in the art. Alternatively, the telescoping could be accomplished by having upper members 27 and 28 slide within lower members 31 and 29, respectively and may be reasonably locked in a number of height positions by any conventional means as would be apparent by those skilled in the art.

Another embodiment of the ballet bar device is illustrated in Fig. 12, and is constructed so that the height of ballet bar 34 is adjustable. This is preferably accomplished by having bar 34 held to substantially vertical members 35 and 36 by anchorage assemblies 38 and 37. The substantially vertical members 35 and 36 have a number of spaced holes so that ballet bar 34 can be held at the desired height.

The ballet bar device can be accomplished with alternative frame designs as long as it carries a ballet bar of adjustable height. Alternatively, the ballet bar can be wall mounted and the training mats used separately as illustrated in Figures 6 and 7.

Accordingly, the present invention allows individuals wishing to learn ballet, a practical device that will help them acquire the skills and confidence in the basic ballet steps. Knowledge of the basic ballet steps is fundamental for the future development of the dancer. The present invention avails itself of the advantage that the dancer can practice the basic ballet movements while supporting themselves with the provided ballet balancing bar. This allows the dancer to acquire the necessary skills to progress at an accelerated rate compared to dancers who do not practice. Additionally, the use of tactile indicia as herein before defined will help visually impaired dancers learn to dance.

Any discussion of documents, acts, materials, devices, articles or the like which has been included in the present specification is solely for the purpose of providing a context for the present invention. It is not to be taken as an admission that any or all of these matters form part of the prior art base or were common general knowledge in the field relevant to the present invention as it existed in Australia before the priority date of each claim of this application.

Throughout this specification the word "comprise", or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated element, integer or step, or group of elements, integers or steps, but not the exclusion of any other element, integer or step, or group of elements, integers or steps.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.

The present invention relates generally to training devices to teach proper foot position and movement for individuals, especially novice ballet dancers, wherein the training device comprises a training mat and an adjustable height ballet bar. The correct position of the bar is a function of the height of the user and it is important to be able to adjust the height of the bar, especially for young individuals. It is believed that the training device avails itself of the advantage of helping individuals to learn the basic ballet steps. Additionally, it is thought that the use of the training device as herein defined will help visually impaired students acquire a level of proficiency in the basic ballet steps.

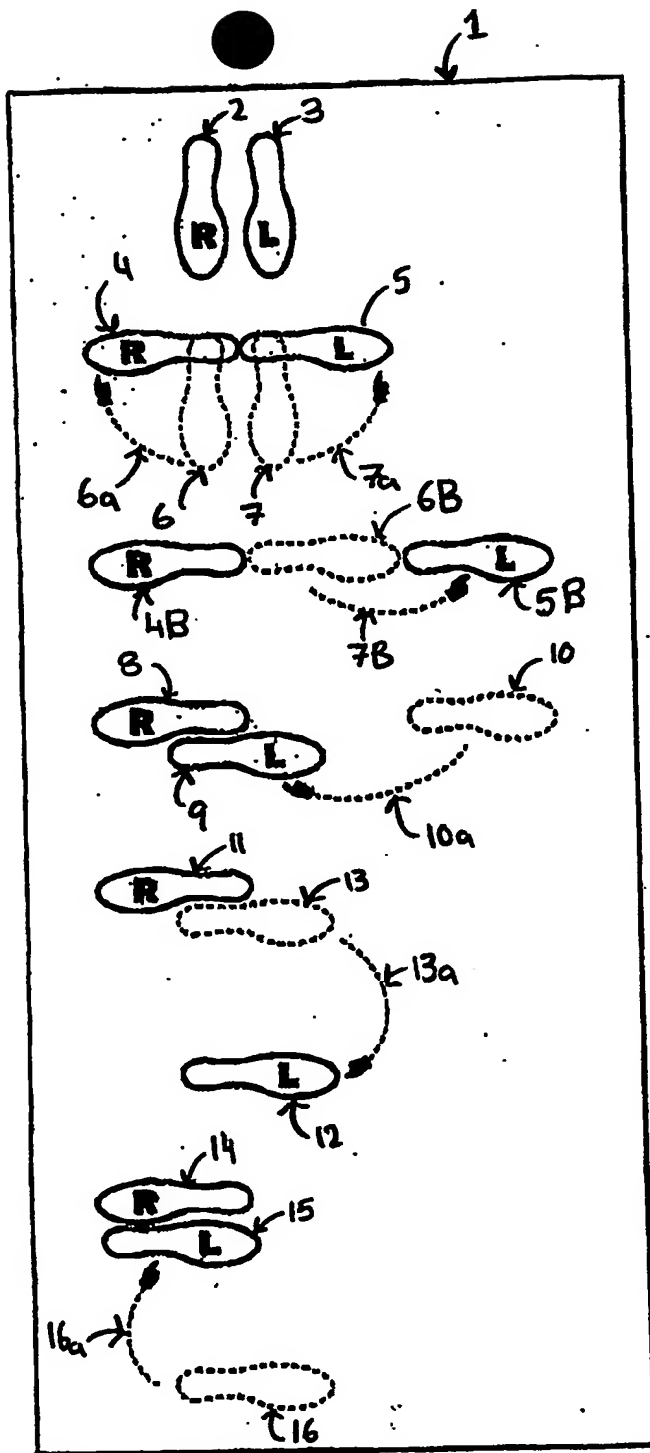


Fig. 1.

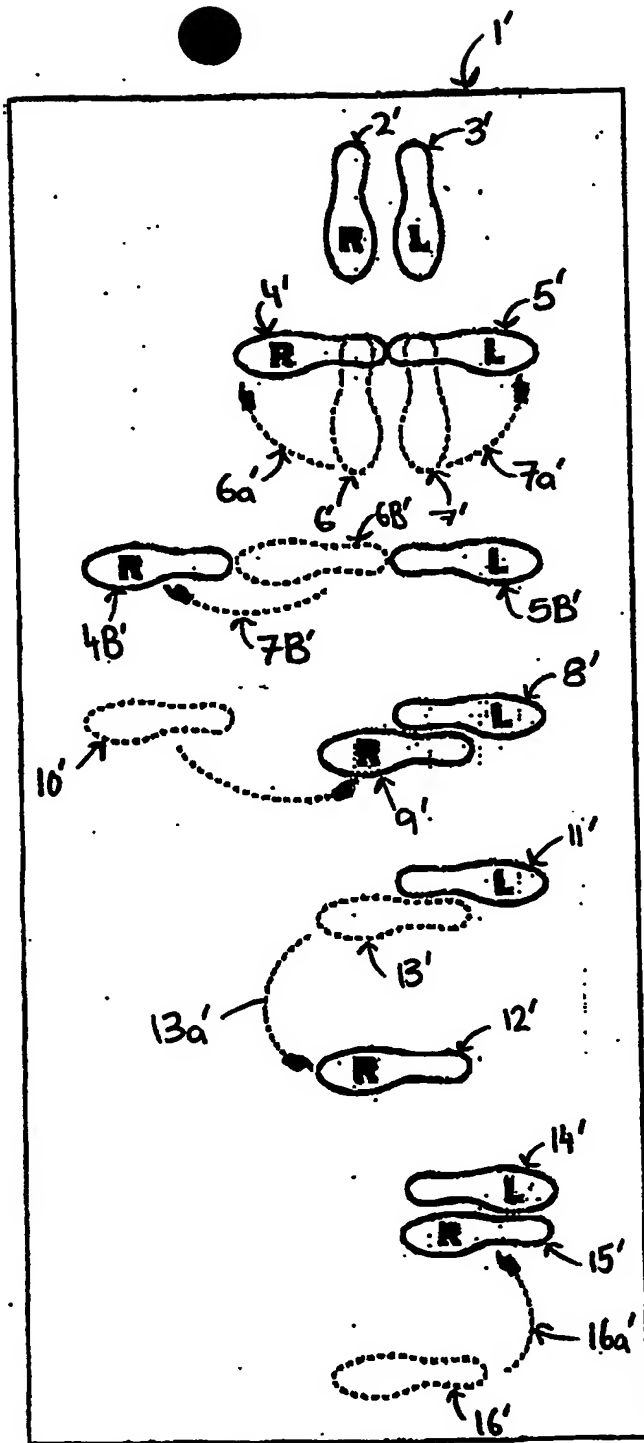


Fig. 1a.

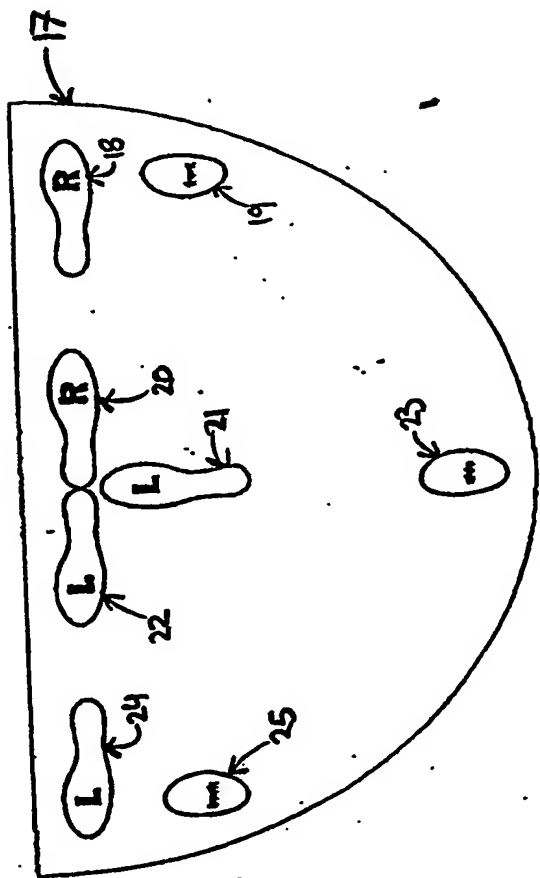


Fig. 2.

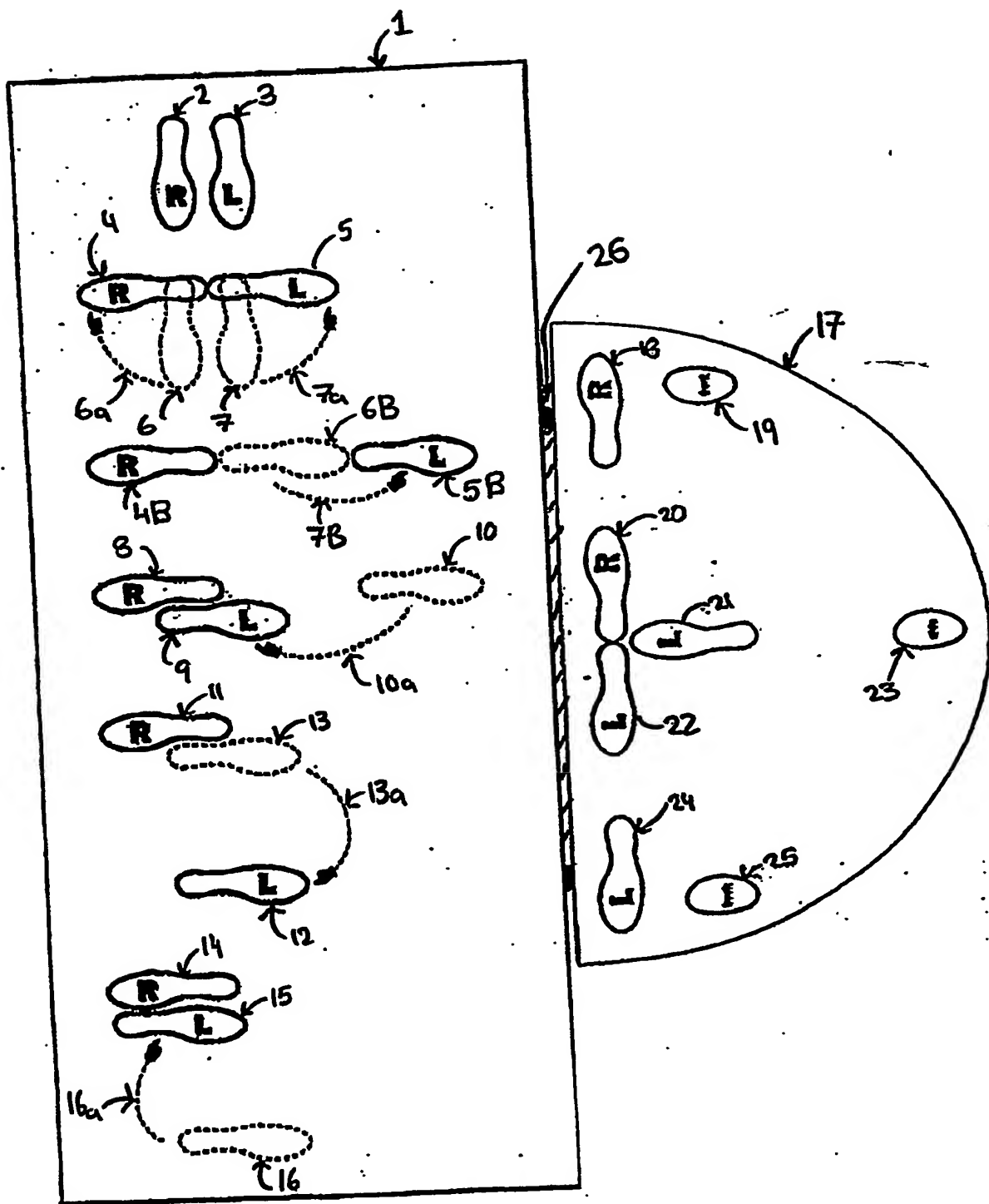


Fig. 3.

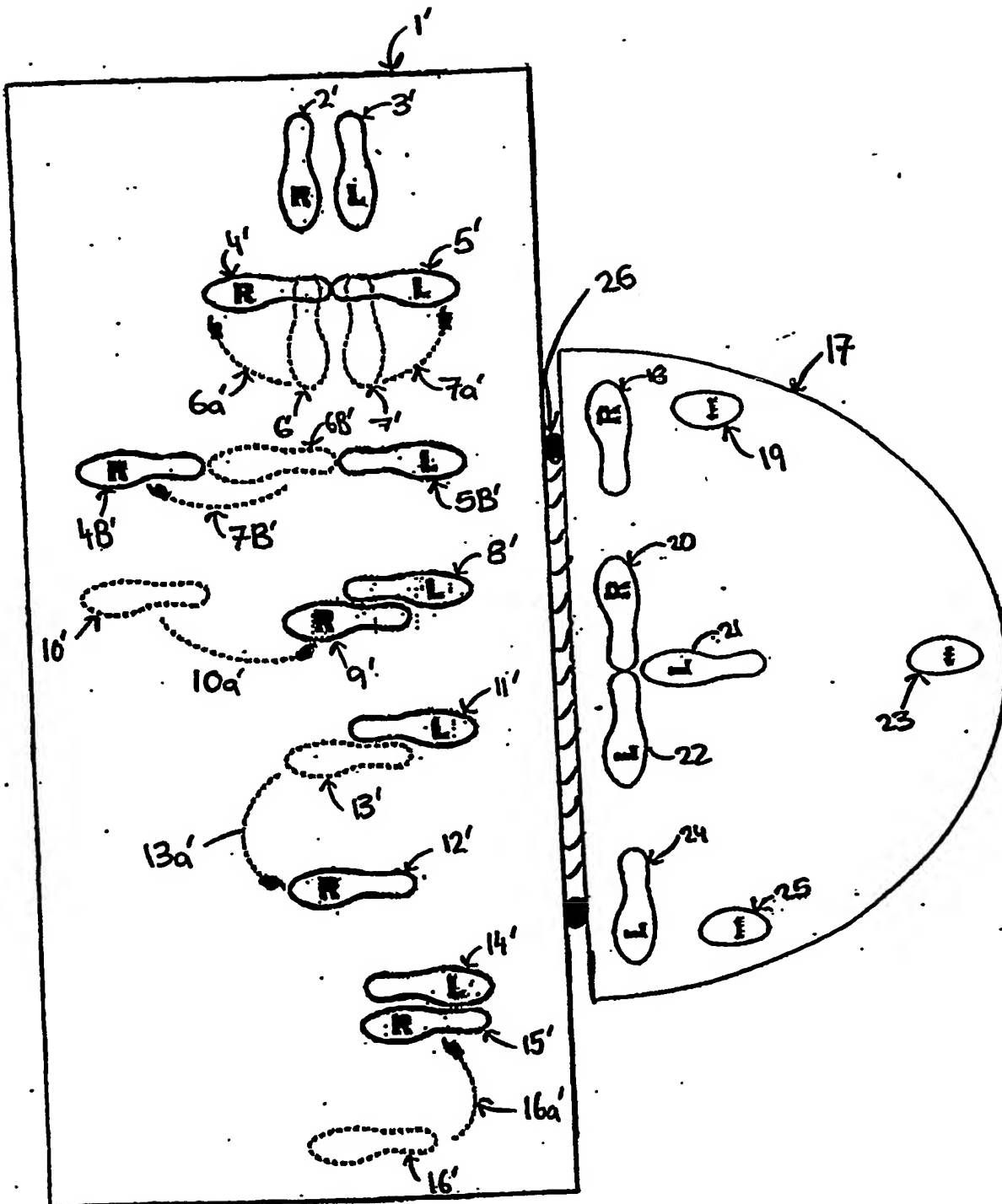


Fig. 3a.

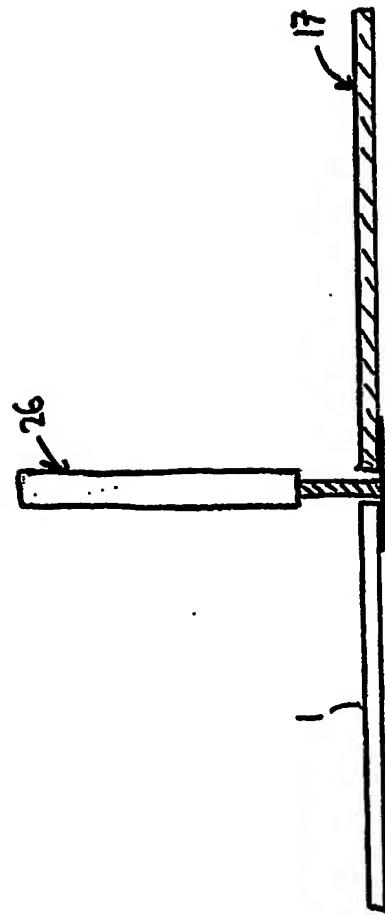


Fig. 4.

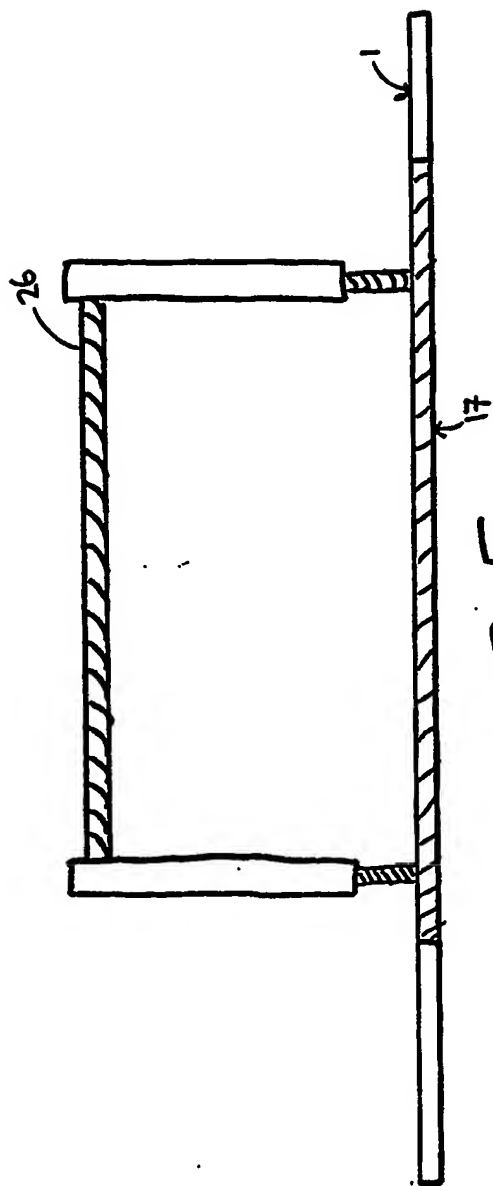


Fig. 5.

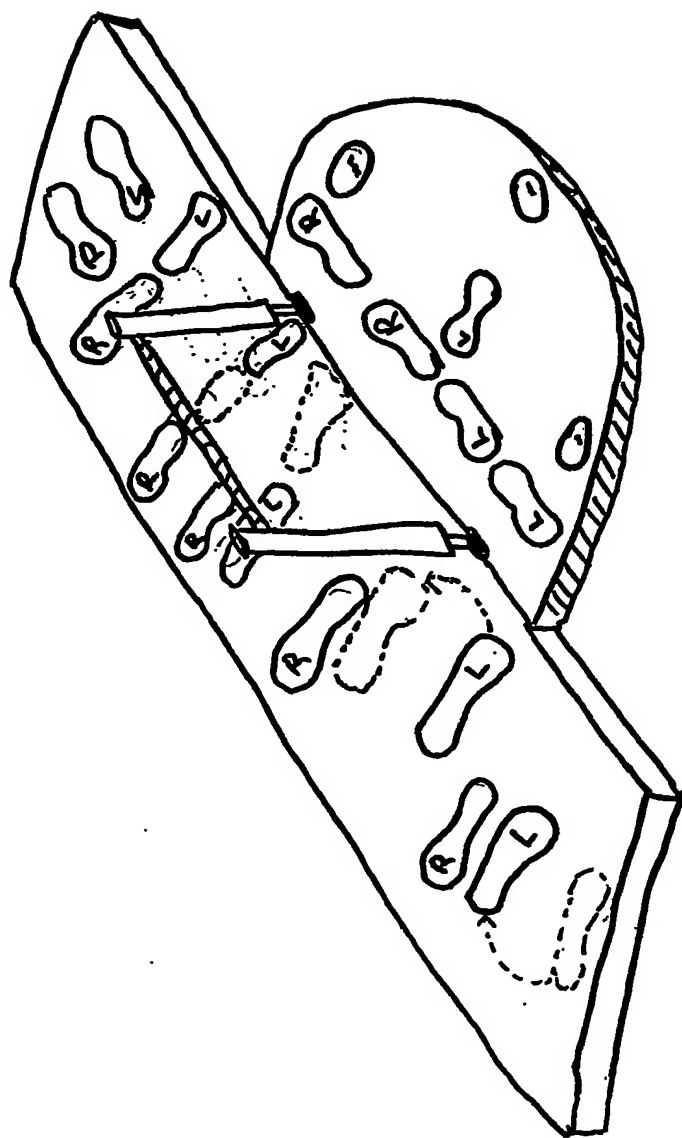


Fig. 6.

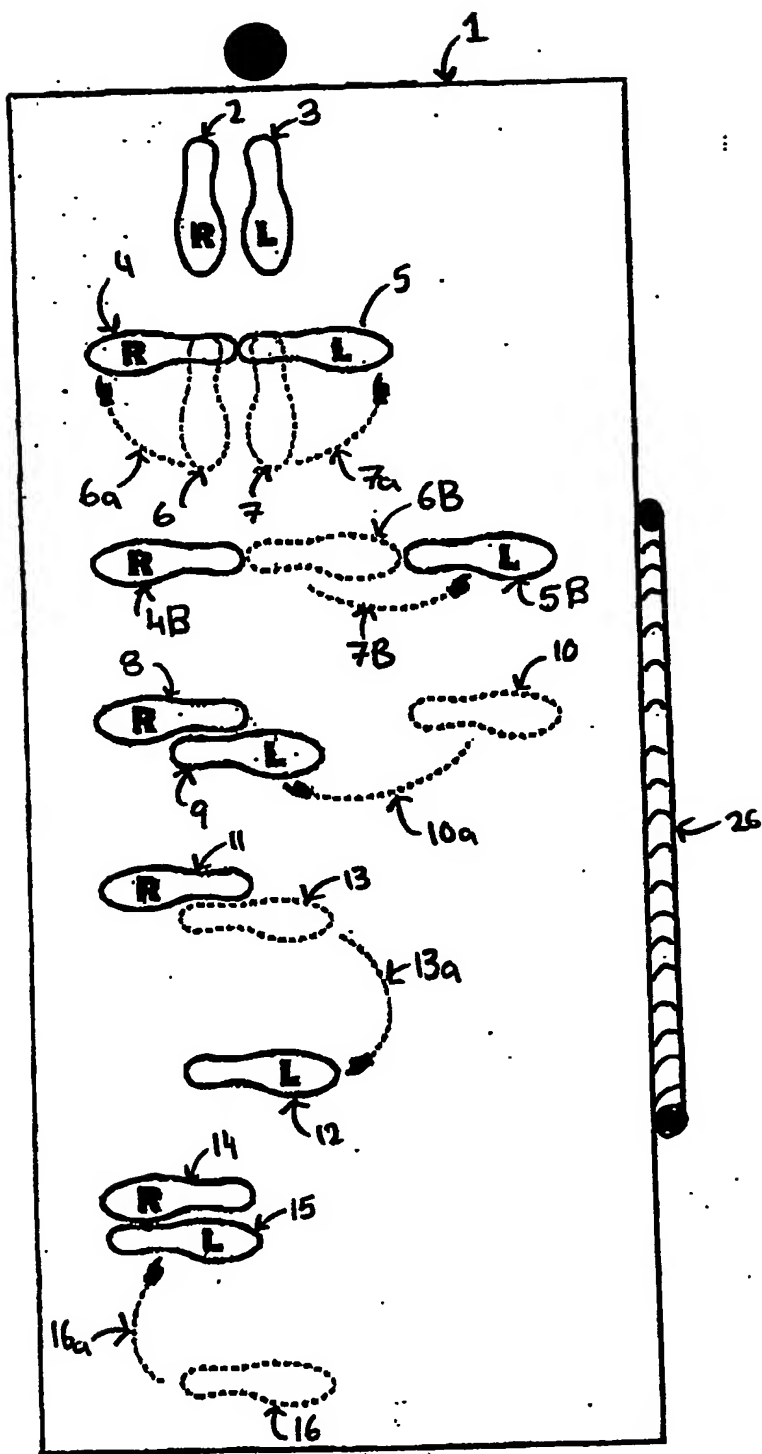


Fig. 7.

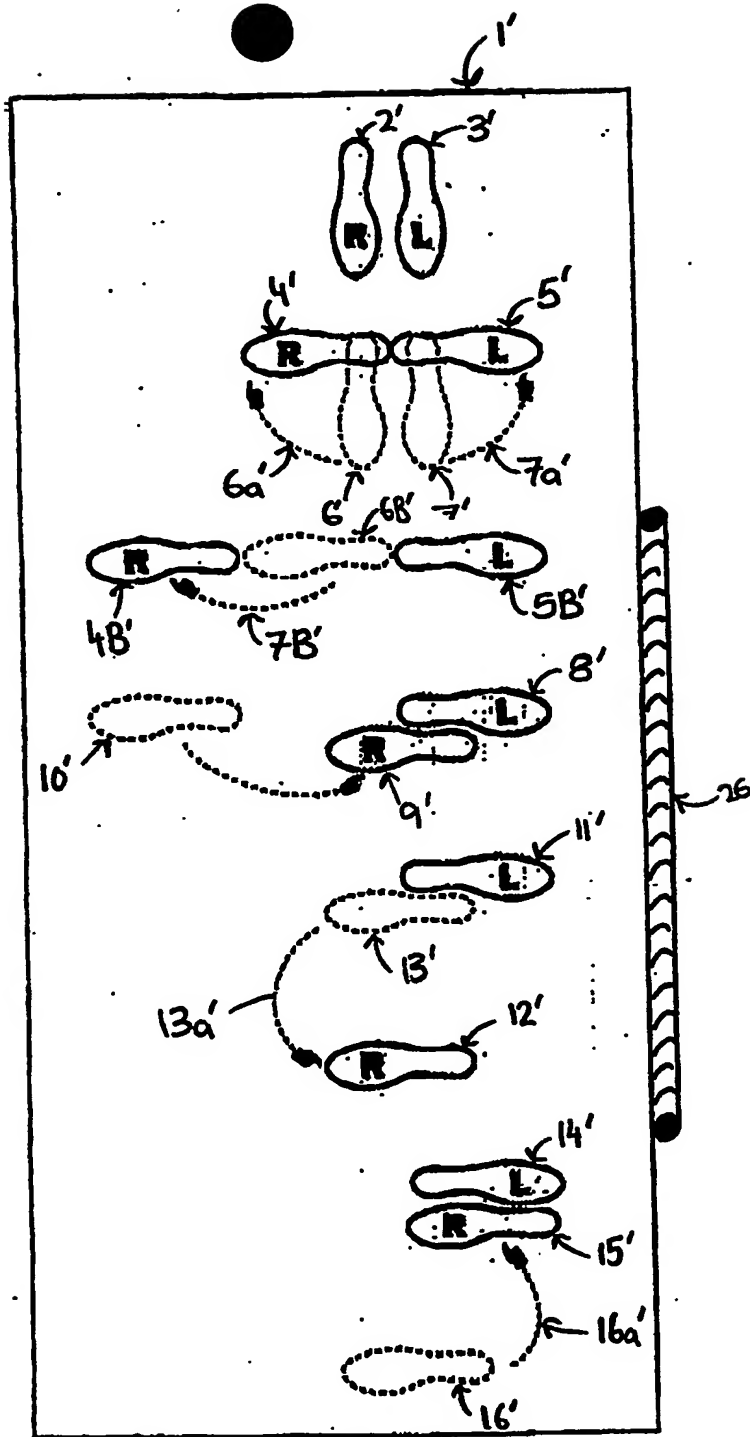


Fig. 7a

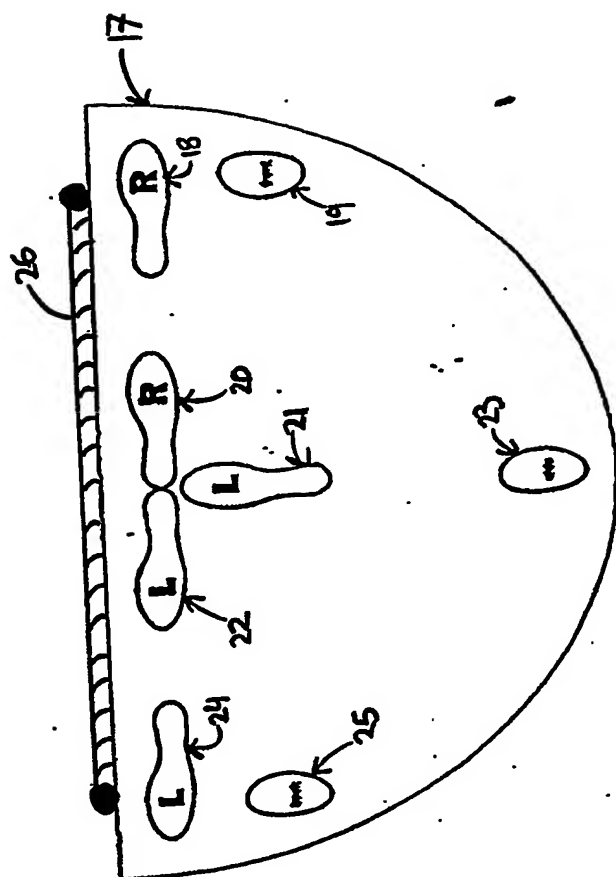


FIG. 8.

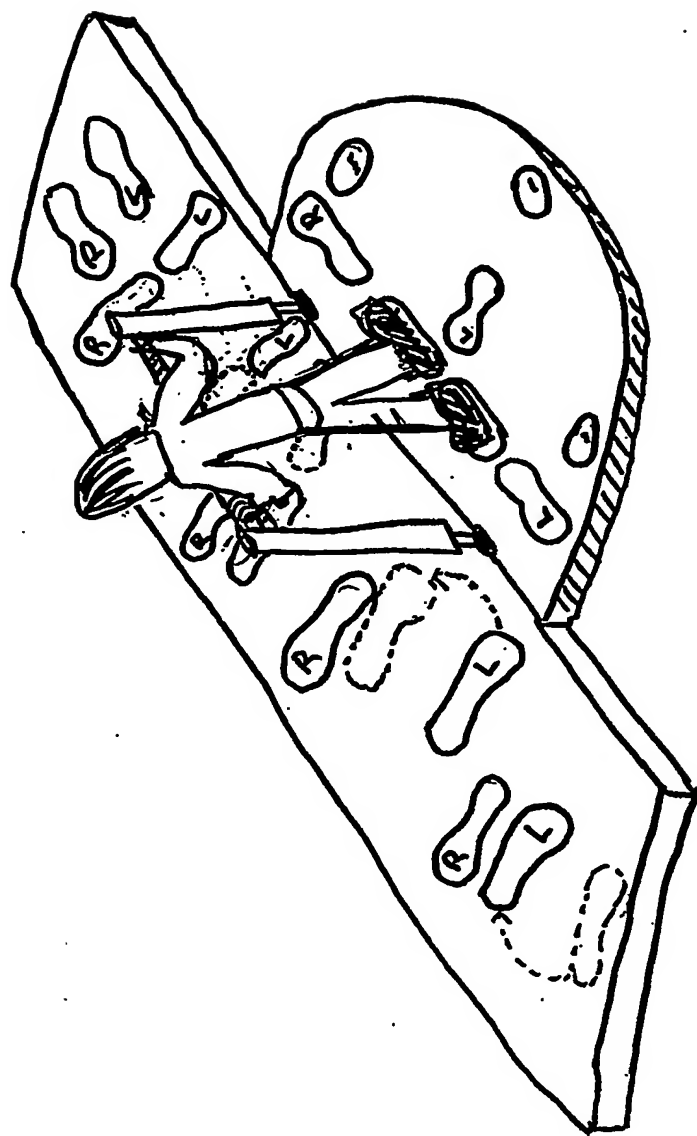


Fig. 9.

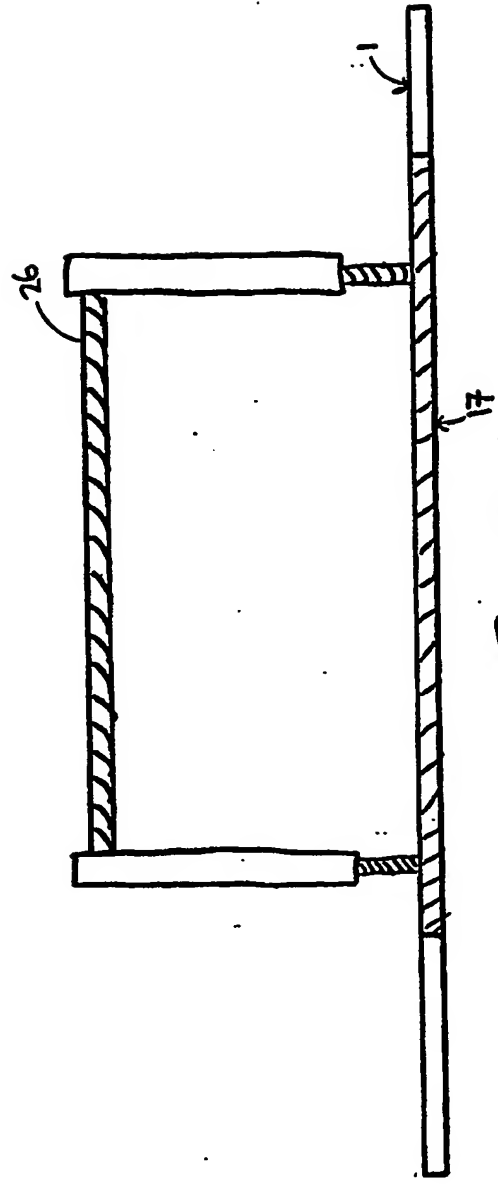


Fig. 10.

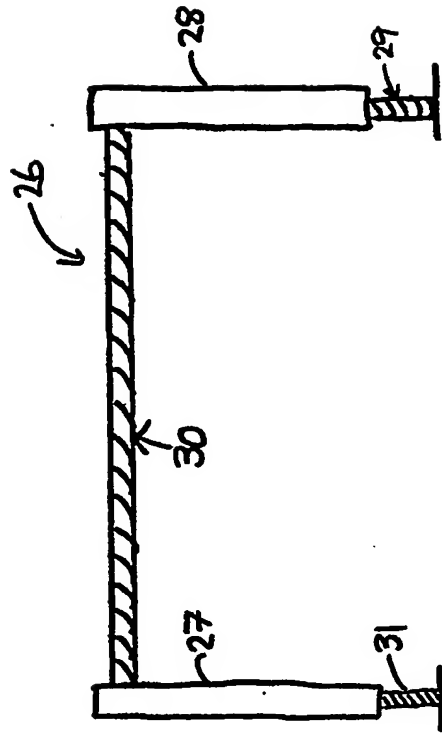


Fig. 11

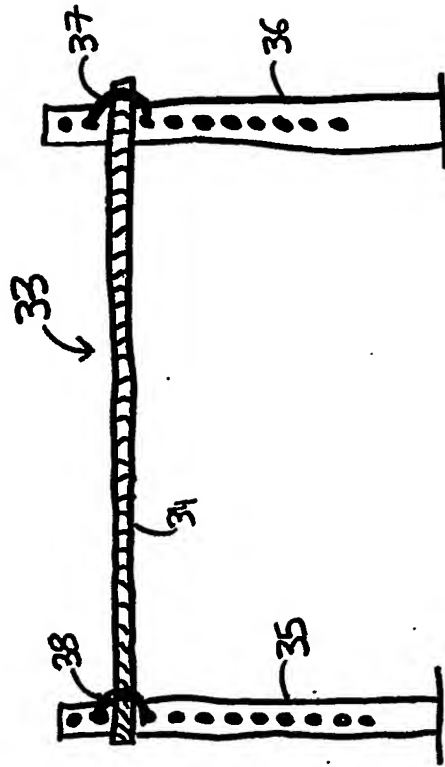


Fig 12